

T

A
C A L L

To a General
Reformation of Manners.

AND
Manifesting, in several Particulars,
the great Lets and Hinderances
thereunto.

Preached at the Arch-Deacon of Sudbury's
Visitation, holden at *Kentford* in *Suffolk*, in
April last, 1700.

By *CLEMENT HEIGHAM*, Esq;
now Rector of *Barrow* in *Suffolk*.

Prov. XXVIII. 4.
*They that forsake the Law, praise the Wicked; but such as
keep the Law, contend with them.*

L O N D O N,
Printed by *John Darby* for *Richard Thurlbourn* Book-
seller in *Cambridg*, 1700.

CALL

To a General

Registration of Members

AND

the great loss and inconvenience
to the members



Resolved, that the members of the Society of Friends
be notified to register their names in the book of members

BY ORDER OF THE YEARLY MEETING
1827

That the members of the Society of Friends be notified to register their names in the book of members

JOHN DODD

Printed by John Dodds, at the Baptist Church, in the City of London.

(iii) 17
vi

To the Right Honourable,
and truly Noble,

CHARLES

Lord Viscount Townshend.

Much Honoured and Noble Lord,

HIS Majesty's Proclamation
against Immoralities, and the
Honourable Houses of Parlia-
ment piously concurring, by some good
Laws, to assist and strengthen the Mini-
stry,

stry in the suppressing of Vice ; as it gave me a secret Pleasure, so it did encourage me to frame and preach this following Discourse, and for exposing this Sermon in print to a more publick View. I am not without hopes it may do some good upon such as shall cast their Eye upon it (the Discourse being on an Argument wherein all good Men do agree) but more especially it may let some that are in great Authority see that there are great Lets and Hinderances amongst us as to an universal Reformation of Manners ; and some of them are such Lets and Hinderances, as only the Wisdom of the Nation in Parliament can remove.

And I am the more emboldned to
make use of Your Lordship's Name, and
to

The Dedication.

v

to crave Your Patronage, not only upon the account of Your great Honour, eminent Parts, and most agreeable Virtue (whereby You shine amongst our Nobility, and do attract the Affections of all Good Men) but because great Examples are powerful, and have a mighty Influence to bear down Vice, and to encourage Goodness. And I am fully persuaded Your Lordship will in Your High Place endeavour to promote that Great Design which this Discourse points at, which is, to promote the true and lasting Happiness of our Church and State; and which can be effected by no other means than by making the Almighty God our Patron and Friend, which can only be by depressing Wickedness, and encouraging Piety and universal Goodness.

And

*And upon these accounts it is that
I pray for Your Lordship's Health and
Happiness in this Life, and Your end-
less Glory hereafter ; and shall always
approve my self*

*Your Lordship's most honouring,
most Faithful, and most
Obedient Kinsman, and
Humble Servant,*

CLEMENT HEIGHAM.

MATTHEW V. 16.

Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your Good Works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven.

THESE words have a reference to the three foregoing Verses, in which our Saviour applies himself to his Disciples, and all sorts of true Christians; and requires them to set forth the Purity of their Doctrine, and the Purity and Exactness of their Lives to that advantage, that by the authority and soundness of their Doctrine and goodness of their Conversation, the Nation, or the World, might be kept from putrefying or stinking. And he compares the Christian Church to a City set upon a high illustrious place, which is easily seen by all that travel near it; which City (if it be kept clean and beautiful) will attract and draw Travellers to it; but if otherwise, it will make them shun and abhor it. Wherefore our Saviour requires them all to set forth such an eminent Light to the World both by their Doctrine and suitable Life, that by their bright shining Lustre the thick Mists of Ignorance, and the grosser Darkness of Sin and Wickedness might be dispelled; and that others seeing

seeing and beholding this Glorious State of the Christian Church, might be invited thereby to glorify their Father which is in Heaven.

These words then of our Saviour, with respect to their Connexion with the former Verses, do contain,

First, A Precept or Command to all sorts of Christians to preserve pure and sound Doctrine, and to lead exemplary Lives futable to their holy Faith and Doctrine.

Secondly, The words contain a powerful Argument to enforce good Christian Practice, that others seeing your good Lives, may glorify your Heavenly Father; or, that the ignorant sinful part of the World may receive saving Influences (by virtue derived from the Purity of your Doctrine, and Goodness of your Lives) and so Glory may redound to God.

First, For the Precept or Command in general to all sorts of Christians to preserve pure and sound Doctrine, to see that their Copy be pure, and fair, and good (and this is of great import) for if our Faith, or any allowed Doctrines of our Christian Society be stained or corrupted (especially if ill Practice in any kind be the natural consequence of such allowed Doctrines or matters of Faith) this tends to destroy the great end of all Religion. But (God be thanked) our Articles of Faith, and the allowed Doctrines of our Church, are sound and good; neither

ther is our Publick Worship of God corrupted so, that the publick Assemblies are become Schools of Idolatry and Wickedness, as perhaps may be with great truth said concerning some other Church that exalts it self, and looks big in the eye of the World.

Here now (if time would permit me) I might take a very fair occasion to represent the Faith, and Doctrine, and Government of our Church, which we all own our selves Members of; and to set forth the Purity and Soundness of it, and shew the agreement of it to all that was owned by the Primitive Church in its best estate; to convince how full it is to all the purposes of a good Christian Life; and to manifest plainly that neither our Holy Worship and Services are corrupted, nor doth the Church of *England* give any one License to Sin.

But this is a large Field to enter into; and our Faith and Doctrine, and way of Worship and Government, hath been sufficiently set forth and justified by many Learned Men of our own Communion, and sealed and confirmed by the Blood of Holy Martyrs.

And therefore I shall say no more of the Copy; but I shall insist upon that which our Faith and Doctrine and Discipline points at; which is to influence all Christians so to live as our Faith and Doctrine and Government enjoins them to do, and thereby to manifest to the eye of the World the Excellency and

Goodness of their Faith and Doctrine by their regular and holy Practices: For what will a good Copy signify to them whose Lives do not write after it, and so adorn it? What doth it signify to talk of a good Way of Worship, if we do not frequent it, and join in it as devout Worshippers too? What doth it signify to commend our holy Religion, which requires strict Sobriety, Chastity and Modesty of Life, and a due Fear and Veneration of God; and yet at the same time to lie wallowing in the Sins that are contrary to all this? What doth it signify to commend the Government of the Church, and yet at the same time to despise and disobey it?

At the rate that most Christians live, they do but blot and disgrace their Copy, tho otherwise never so very beautiful and comely.

Wherefore then to excite you all to manifest the Goodness of your Faith and Doctrine by your exemplary Lives:

This I shall do in the following Method.

1st, I shall urge those Motives to Good Life, which our Common Christianity affords us.

2^d, And that with respect to this solemn Occasion, I shall point out those several Complaints that are made of some special Lets and Hinderances to an universal good Practice amongst us; and I shall shew what

what those Lets and Hinderances are, and what must be the Cure and Remedy.

3^d, I shall shew that to lead good Lives our selves, and to remove all those Lets and Hinderances to others, is the only way to bring Glory to God, Honour and Reputation to our Holy Church, with Safety and Prosperity to this Nation.

1st, Then for the Motives to Good Life, which our Common Christianity affords us; and to comprize them as short as I can.

You all know, when you were Baptized, what strict Obligations that laid upon you to live well; and some of you know what farther additions you have voluntarily made by receiving Confirmation at the Bishop's hands, and after that often receiving the Holy Communion. And who could now think that any person having passed under all these means of Grace, should yet be only a Christian in Title and Name? Let me persuade all such Christians (if there be any such here present) that they live according to their Christian Profession: For it is only so doing that can assure the sincerity of their Faith; it is only so doing that must inspirit and enliven their hopes of another and better Life; it is only so doing that can manifest their growth in Grace; it is only so doing that can assure their Victory compleat, and that the Seed of God abideth prevailingly in their Hearts: It is only a holy and regular Practice that can discover the efficacy of all our means of Grace, and that the end

of Christ's Death is answered by us; and this alone will convince Beholders that we are truly the Sons of God, and shall be Members of the Church Triumphant in the next Life, as we are living Members of Christ here: It is this alone that must dispel all our Fears and Doubts when we come to die; and a good Christian Practice will do it beyond the best Confessor in the World. And besides all this, a sincere good Christian Life will help you to find Truth, and to keep close to it when you have it; for indeed it is a love to Sin that makes men uncertain in a good Religion; and 'tis a godly Life that will prove the excellency of your Doctrine to others beyond all the best penn'd Discourses in the World: for a good Life is an Argument to sense, and convinceth the eye of the Beholder. Man cannot see the Heart; but we may read Men in their Lives: We know the Tree is alive by the Fruit. Indeed there are many external Acts of Worship and Duty, which a mere Hypocrite may perform with great applause; but when there is a thorow Change wrought in our Manners from all that is bad to all that is good, this is a visible demonstration that the Almighty Spirit of God hath been working in us, and that we are become the Children of God: When from an intemperate Life we are become strictly sober; when from malicious, haughty, and fierce and uncharitable, we are become meek, and humble, and merciful; when from the love of the World we are become heavenly-minded; when from impatience under Crosses and Troubles, we are become resigned and submissive to the Will of God in all things, and so from all Vices to the contrary Graces and Virtues; this

is a visible demonstration of a mighty Change wrought in us by the Power of God : This is a plain discovery that the very Body of Sin grows weak, and is destroyed by a Divine Omnipotent Power ; and that the Grace of God is strong and lively, and prevails over all our Corruptions.

These are the Motives that might be enlarged upon to a Volume ; but I can only point at those Heads, which I doubt not but you can usefully improve in your own private Thoughts and Meditations, which God grant you all may.

I now proceed to the Second thing proposed, which is to point out some special great Lets and Hinderances to an universal Reformation of Manners amongst us : And these I shall set forth by way of Complaints, and they are such as do require redress ; and the first Complaint that I shall mention, is,

I. Against the Guides of our Church ; as if some of these Lights did not burn so clear in their Conversations as they ought to do. So far as this may be true, there ought to be speedy Remedies applied : *Nam quo magis quisque eminet, eo gravius nocet malo exemplo, si se perverse gerit. Vult ergo Christus Apostolos eo majore studio intentos esse ad pie sancteq; vivendum quam quoslibet è vulgo obscuros homines ; quia omnium oculi in eos quasi in lucernas conjecti sunt ; nec ullo modo ferendos esse, nisi vite integritas doctrina cujus sunt ministri, respondeat.* No doubt Ministers ought rather to be more strict than other Men, because the consequence thereof

thereof is greater; for if the Shepherd wanders, no doubt but the Sheep will go astray. And besides all this, *Cum Pastorum vita merito despicitur, eorum doctrina & verba consequenter contemnentur.* He that leads an idle Life may preach with Truth and Reason, as did the Pharisees; but not as Christ, or as one having Authority.

Thus speaks the excellent Bishop Taylor, in his *Rules and Advices to the Clergy.* But I come not here as an Informer against Men of the same sacred Character with my self, and such as, generally speaking, are the greatest Supporters of Religion in this Kingdom: I say the greatest Supporters of Religion in this Nation; for with reverence be it spoken to a higher Order, it is not a Triennial Light (tho shining never so clear) that will dispel our Darkness; but it is these lesser Lamps, always burning and shining in our Villages by holy Instructions and godly charitable Lives, that must dispel our Fogs of Ignorance and practical Wickedness.

Second Complaint

Is of the want of constant catechizing of Children and Servants; or rather, I think, there is a great want of a useful and profitable way of instructing young people.

It is certainly a great mistake to think that merely the asking the Questions of the Church Catechism, and receiving the Answers, will ever make any great improvement;

provement ; no nor reading an Exposition upon some Article of Faith or other matters : This will not do ; but it is applying our selves particularly to every particular catechized Person by practical Questions, and receiving their Answers, confirmed by them by Proofs of Scripture, that must settle firm Grounds of Religion in the Hearts of the Instructed. And what if Ministers would bestow one hour upon a Week-day upon this great Work, and at the same time cast some Charity upon the poorer sort, to encourage them to come constantly ? I can assure from long experience, that they that do this, should themselves feel the comfort of it, and see the great benefit of their Care and Labours, to the Glory of God, and the good of many poor Christians committed to their charge ; and I do boldly say, there is no way like this to plant substantial Goodness, and to undermine Schisms and Separations, and to preserve the Church both pure and in Unity and Peace. And besides this good effect I have seen, it encourages the common People to bring up their Children to reading ; and by a sort of emulation amongst themselves, it makes young Persons to thirst after and improve in Divine practical Knowledge : It prepares them for Confirmation, and makes them fit to come early to the Holy Communion ; yea, it cultivates their Manners betimes, and keeps them from the common Vices of the World.

Third Complaint,

And that is concerning the Male-administrations of some Officers in our Spiritual Courts, as that which
greatly

greatly hinders a Reformation of Manners amongst us. I do conceive it is of great moment to the true Interests of Religion, and the Service of the Church, that the chief Governours of those Courts should watchfully attend the management of business there, especially in what concerns the exercise of Discipline against Offenders. I have made it my observation for many years, that wherever I have lived, some tolerable care hath been taken for the cleansing and repairing of our Churches; but little or no care hath been taken about the living and walking Temples to scour off their Defilements. Betwixt the Churchwardens gross negligence in discharging their Oaths by making due Presentments, and the Remissness, or much worse Practice of some inferiour Officers of those Courts, there has been done little service (so far as I could see) either to the reclaiming of any Offenders, or to the deterring any persons from the too customary Sins of the World: Nor do I see how any great good can be expected, where Churchwardens seldom or never consult their Ministers about their Presentments. Nor do the Spiritual Courts consult with the Ministers about the most proper way of dealing with lapsed Christians; but matters relating to Offenders are either secretly hudled up (and it is to be feared sometimes corruptly too) or if there be a publick Penance, there is such a trifling management in the execution of it, as that it carries no weight, nor produceth any effect, but turns all into a ridicule: but in special, as to Commutations of Penance, there hath been great twerving from the Rule. I am not so vain as to censure and condemn in the general all private Penances,
or

or Commutations of Penance, when they are done as the Canon directs, and thereby are made serviceable to the Interests of true Piety and Charity ; but when they are made use of only to serve the Purse of the Offenders, and to satisfy the private greedy humor of some inferior Officers, who suck no small advantage to themselves by such secret Sin- Offerings (as hath been done) you must give me leave to tell you, such Practices become not Christian Courts ; but so far as this Charge amounts to, they are Scandals and Grievances, and ought to be reformed.

These Spiritual Courts ought to strengthen and assist the Ministry in their great Work, that such as are too hard and rocky for our spiritual Weapons, may be broken and subdued by them to Repentance, or cut off and cast out wholly, as rotten Members, by the sacred and dreadful Censures of the Church.

Fourth Complaint.

The fourth great Complaint is against the main Body of Christians, as if there were almost a total Eclipse, a general failure in the Morals of Persons in our Christian Communion. The King and the Houses of Parliament do observe that Wickedness hath advanced amongst us ; and they do wisely discern what Calamities and Mischiefs a great Dissolution of Manners will bring upon this Church and Nation ; and therefore they are labouring by good Laws to stem the Tide, and to stop the great Inundations of Wickedness that threaten to overflow and drown us.

C

And

And God knows our Danger is very great : for such whose Eyes can reach but to a small compass, cannot but see the Drunkenness, the Uncleaness, the Swearing, the Lying, the Killing, the Stealing, and what not, in some places or other of the Nation ; and therefore needs must the Land mourn, *Hosea* 4. 2, 3. Yea so deeply radicated are some Sins, so strengthen'd by Custom, so emboldned by the Numbers offending, and so confirmed by Impunity, that could the Pulpit breath Fire upon such as these, it could not melt them into better manners. And besides all this, that which I take to be the completion of this Nation's Misery, is this, That Parish Officers, Constables and Churchwardens especially, whose Oaths oblige them to bring Delinquents to just Punishment ; they are content to complement away their Oaths, and their Souls too, for good Neighbourhood sake : They can wipe their Mouths, and cry all is well, tho they cannot but see and know, if they were not wilfully blind, how by the wicked Lives of many under their Inspection, God is provoked, Christianity is wounded and scandalized ; and by the ill Examples of most, the good dispositions of others are corrupted, and Wick- edness is propagated, to the great dishonour of God, and reproach of our holy Religion. Wherefore, as this Occasion invites me, I will give my friendly advice to Church-Officers ; and I shall speak my mind almost in the very words of that noble Divine Mr. *George Herbert*. In his Book of Advices to the COUNTRY Ministers, amongst many other good Instructions, he counsels all Ministers in their respective Cures to let their Churchwardens know, that the
great

great care and charge of the Parish lies upon them; and indeed the whole Order and Discipline of the Parish is put into their hands. If the Minister reforms any thing, it is out of the overflowing of his Conscience, whereas the Churchwardens are to do it by Command and by Oath. By the Laws of the Kingdom the Churchwardens are to levy Penalties for negligence in resorting to Church, or for disorderly Carriage in time of Divine Service. And I may add, that by your present Articles of Enquiry, you are to present the gross Immoralities of Offenders.

But, as the same excellent Mr. *Herbert* goes on: It is the greatest Honour of this World, says he, to do God and his Chosen service, or, as *David* says, to be a Door-keeper in the House of God.

Now the Canons being the Church-wardens Rule, you are to read, or hear them read often, as also the Visitation Articles, which are grounded upon the Canons; that so you may know your Duties, and keep your Oaths the better: in which regard, considering the great consequence of your Places, and more of your Oaths, you are by no means to spare any, tho never so great; but if, after gentle and neighbourly Admonitions, they still persist in ill, you are to present them: for your Obligations to God, and your own Souls, are above any temporal Tie, any worldly Respects. Do well and right, and let the World sink.

And indeed, unless Parish-Officers will be watchful to discover Offenders, and then perform their Oaths,

all hopes of a General Reformation of Manners must be at an end, and the Land must still groan under the burden of Wickedness.

Fifth Complaint

Is concerning the great want of Family-Religion among the Generality of Christians, and the not employing the Lords-day profitably in our Houses, as well as in the Church.

Next to the sacred Ministry, there is nothing would conduce more to the reforming a corrupt World, and to the keeping up a due sense of God and serious Religion, than the due care of Masters and Mistresses and Parents to discharge all that Duty which both Nature and Grace teacheth them; that is, to pray in and with their Families, and to instruct them; and to restrain and govern those Children and Servants that are under their care and charge. And if those Housholders, whose daily necessities will not allow them much time for these Employments upon the other days of the week, would employ the Lords-day carefully, both in the publick Assemblies and in their private Houses, to benefit themselves and those that belong to their care, we might then hope to see Sin restrained, and Goodness universally planted: But until Families shall become Nurseries of Religion and Good-manners, and shall become like little Churches and sacred places both for good Instruction and holy Worship, no great Reformation is to be expected. Some may perhaps call this Puritanism; but call it what

what they will, I take it to be an infallible truth, that it is exemplary Godliness that can only restore and preserve the Church.

Sixth Complaint

Is of the Sacrilegious Inclinations of Persons in our Communion: and that which unavoidably follows the making the Church poor, is the contempt of the Sacred Function. But this may seem to some a very remote Hinderance as to the reforming the World: but it is not so; for what great things can be expected where the Ministers Maintenance is either wholly precarious, or if it be settled by Law, it is very strait, poor, and necessitous? And a mean or precarious Livelihood too often cramps the Tongue of the Preacher, and makes it afraid to speak plain; and what is worse, it hinders study, and begets servile and base Compliances: And in plain English, scandalous Livings too often make scandalous Priests; and where it is so, what Reformation can there be hoped for?

Our greatest and best Men saw this Mischief long ago, and that not only Churchmen, but some others of Great Name.

And here I cannot but mention one, a great Light, and Prelate of our Church, the famous Bishop *Jewel*. In a Sermon of his before the then Queen, we have these words: "What may be guessed at their Intent
" who decay the Provisions of the House of God,
" and so basely esteem the Ministers of the Gospel,
" altho in other things they do well, altho they seem
" to

“ to rejoice at the Prosperity of *Sion*, and to seek the
 “ safety of the Lord’s Anointed ? yet needs must it
 “ be that by these means foreign Power shall again be
 “ brought in upon us, such things shall be done unto
 “ us as we before suffered in the times of Popery.
 “ And, saith the same Bishop *Jewel*, the Parsonages
 “ and Vicarages are the very Castles and Towers of
 “ defence for the Lord’s Temple ; and if they be not
 “ better furnished with a due Maintenance, and made
 “ more secure against Contempt, we must expect
 “ God’s Judgment upon us ; and this noble Realm
 “ shall be subject to foreign Nations.

These words to me are very remarkable, as falling
 from so great a Man ; I wish they were not propheti-
 cal : but yet when all is said, ’tis not to be expected
 that the contempt of the Ministry should wholly
 cease. For the Sacred Order by their Office being
 bound to cry down the ways of Sin, which corrupt
 Nature cries up ; the work of the Ministry being to
 promote Sobriety, Righteousness and Holiness, and
 to plant those Graces in the Hearts and Lives of Men,
 which corrupt Nature and the Devil strive against :
 This is so unthankful a work, to irritate and disturb
 Mens Consciences, as close and sound Preaching must
 needs do, to press against the bent of Mens strong In-
 clinations, and to commend to them what they most
 hate ; this is a work which will not procure to him
 much Honour and Esteem that is employed in it in
 this irreligious Age. And our Saviour hath told us
 long ago what we must expect from a wicked World ;
 if we will be faithful in our places : *The World cannot*
hate

hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the Works thereof are evil.

I confess it may seem very strange to a thinking Man, that in a civilized Nation a Man of God should be despised; a Man of God by his sacred Character and Message, and whose Office it is to guide and conduct Souls to Heaven. Little do Christians consider how much they owe to the main body of the despised Clergy.

By them you are baptized, by them you are instructed in all saving Knowledge; by their Prayers your Souls do receive aid and assistance from Heaven; by their Prayers Judgments are kept off from a People; at their hands you often receive the Bread of Life, and by them your departing Souls are commended to God: and if there were any Magistrates here, I would tell them, and justify it too, that the Peace and Prosperity of the Kingdom is more owing to the Pulpit and an orthodox regular Clergy, than to all the Courts of Judicature. 'Tis not the Magistrates Sword alone that would preserve you, if the daily and weekly Labours of the Ministry did not instil good Principles, and keep the Consciences of men awake, and make men more afraid of Sin than all your Axes and Rods can do: It is the Ministers Labours that dispel that Ignorance, so far as it is dispelled amongst us: It is the Ministers faithful Labours that break the force of mens Corruptions, and make them more dutiful to God, and submissive to their Governours.

And

And therefore if the Parsonages and Vicarages be the very Castles and Towers of defence for the Lord's Temple, and the greatest security for the State too, sure then it highly concerns all Orders of Men to assist and protect them, and to contribute all they can to secure them from contempt, and to strengthen them in their great work of promoting Religion, and depressing Vice and all manner of Wickedness.

I have now done with the great Lets and Hindrances of an universal Reformation of Manners, and it is no difficult thing to point out what must be the Cure.

1. A devout, faithful and laborious Ministry, supported with a due Maintenance, and made more secure against contempt.
2. The Officers of Parishes must be such as fear God, and that understand the weight of an Oath, and the great consequences of discharging it.
3. Family Religion must be kept up.
4. Children and Servants must be well instructed.
5. The Spiritual Courts must give their utmost assistance to the Ministry.
6. A Religious Magistracy must give their helping hand to punish Vice, and encourage Goodness.

And

And when all these shall mutually conspire to promote the great ends of Religion, we may then hope for a new face of things; we may then hope for a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness; we shall then behold the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour exalted amongst us, which is the hearty desire of all Good Men.

I proceed now to my third and last point, which is to shew, That to lead good Lives our selves, and to remove all those Lets and Hinderances which keep others from doing the same, is the only way to bring Glory to God, Honour and Reputation to our Holy Church, and true Happiness and Safety to our Church and Nation.

1. Then, to promote universal Goodness by our living well, and discouraging Vice, brings Glory to God, as it doth sensibly and experimentally commend the ways of God to a poor ignorant brutish World: It lets the World see that the ways of Religion are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace. A good Christian Life, as it gives inward joy to the Practiser, so it sweetly insinuates a good liking into the Beholders; it strangely attracts the Affections of others, and by a secret invisible force it charms the Passions, and delights the Beholders. The glorious Attire of Christian Graces, such as Meekness, Humility and Modesty of Mind; fervent Piety to God, and as fervent Charity to Man; undisguised Friendship; Sincerity in all our Dealings; evenness and equality of Mind in all conditions and estates of our

D

Life;

Life; Conquest over Passions; Contempt of the World; and Sollicitousness for nothing, but to keep up and maintain a joyful Entercourse betwixt God and our Souls: Such a Divine Temper as this doth strangely affect and attract, and must insinuate a good relish into all Beholders; and it is my firm belief that were Persons that are of a good Communion but more exact in their Lives to the Reformed Copy that is before them, it would mightily supercede the necessity of much writing to justify and recommend our way of Worship: for were Mens inward Corruptions more subdued by the force of that Religion which they profess, we should find little to do but to love God, and love one another; and the sweet Relish which ever attends a conscientious well-spent Life, would so confirm and settle good Christians in their way, that they would never doubt or stagger, and many other Beholders that are unsteady and unresolved, would be more easily drawn to join with that Communion of Christians where they see a Divine Presence and Force (and so much Comfort as a good Life produceth) than by all other Arguments in the World.

And this leads to a second Consideration, to enforce good Christian Practice in our selves, and to discourage Vice in others.

2. For it shews our Principles to be sound and good, and that we firmly assent to them as such: It convinceth the World that our Doctrine and way of Worship is from God; This Men will be apt to believe,

lieve, when they see the powerful and visible Influences of it in the change of mens Manners from bad to good : This satisfies men beyond all other Arguments, that there is a Divine Presence amongst us, and that there is a special Assistance and Blessing concurring with the means of Grace that we make use of; and it doth most plainly evince that God's Grace is not bestowed upon us in vain. I would to God that this most excellent Argument (for so the Primitive Christians accounted it) were not so much lost as it is, as to its due force upon Beholders, by the bad Examples of too many Christian Professors. Those first and best Christians could boast of the Truth, the Goodness and Excellency of their Religion, and Soundness of their Doctrine; from the admirable Efficacy and Power it had upon the Hearts and Lives of those that received it. All this is plain from some memorable Passages in *Lactantius's* 3^d Book *de falsa Sapientia*; and also in several places of *Origen*, too long here to be recited.

But 3^{ly}, It brings Glory to God, and great Good to others, as it demonstrates our Religion to be a practicable thing, and that the hardest Duties may be performed. Arguments alone will hardly invite the generality of People to serious and strict Religion, where good Examples are wanting; yea Examples will persuade more effectually than all the best framed Arguments in the World: for men love to see whether the Ways be passable or no, before they adventure themselves; especially where Flesh and Blood tells them there are some Difficulties to encounter, some Rocks and Uneasinesses to climb over; and that they may

happen to meet with much ill usage too in their Journey to Heaven, even from such as pretend to be Friends and Fellow-Travellers. But when men shall see by the Courage and Victory and good Examples of others that commend these ways of Religion, that the worst of Difficulties may be overcome, and are so, by the same Flesh and Blood with themselves; this animates and enlivens their Spirits, and takes off all Objections arising in their Minds from the difficulty of the Attempt.

4. A good Life, and discouraging of Vice, brings Glory to God, as it declares to the World that we stedfastly believe, that without a regular Piety and strict Obedience to the Laws of Christ, none shall be saved. This will visibly discover to the World what our Belief is, and what our Opinions are: This will manifest that we entertain no corrupt and dangerous Principles; and we our selves might appeal to this as a Test, if our Lives were but regularly pious and uniformly good: for a Heresy, or dangerous Error in the Judgment, will for the most part appear in the Practice of him that owns it. And let me tell you, it will not be easy to convince any one that our Judgments in matters of Religion are sound, if our Morals are bad; and of this I am sure, that few will be convinced that we believe a good Life to be absolutely necessary to Salvation, if we do not lead good Lives our selves, and shew also, by our zeal, our dislike of Wickedness in others.

5. and lastly, A thorow Reformation of Manners brings

brings Glory to God, as it gives the Almighty a free occasion to manifest himself in that great Attribute he most delights in, which is in shewing mercy to a sinful Nation, and disposing all things for the Happiness and Safety of it. God will never look favourably upon us, until our crying Sins be removed; and therefore if we do believe that there is a Divine governing Providence, which blesteth or chastiseth a Nation according as they either fear or dishonour him, we must then believe that all our private and publick Happiness and Safety will depend upon our holy living, and discountenancing Vice. Your very Safety and Prosperity in any kind rests more upon this Basis than upon all our wisest Counsels, or the force of Arms: and the very Safety and Reputation of our Church, both at home and abroad, depends upon a thorow Reformation of Manners: yea the Peace, and Honour, and Prosperity of your Families depends upon it; and what is much more valuable, I am sure your inward Peace and comfortable hopes of another Life rests upon your regular good Christian Practice. In a word, your Baptism requires it, and the care of your Childrens Souls and others of your Family exacts this Duty of you, to live well your selves, and to discourage Sin in others. And for many of you that hear me, I must plainly tell you, that your very Offices and solemn Oaths do bind you to prosecute the wicked Doers; and to all of you I say, your Allegiance to God and the King exacts all this at your hands.

Wherefore let the sum of our Thoughts bend this way; let this be the chief end of all our Study, Learning

ing and Reading: Let this be the end of all our Preaching, and Praying, and counselling, and reproving, and correcting, to save our own Souls, and the Souls of others. Then will the Almighty shine upon us, and give us his Blessing; and all *Europe* shall behold and see that we are not only mighty in Battel, but mighty in Prayer too, and shall be forced to confess that God is with us, and on our side, because by due fearing and serving him we are become a wise and understanding People.

But to conclude:

Since so august and puissant a Prince leads the way; since a Prince mighty in Battel to defend and protect us, is neither afraid nor ashamed to engage himself resolutely under the despised Banner of the Cross, and to fight Christ's Battels against the Corruptions of a wicked World, and commands us all not only to live well, but to attend and assist him in our several Offices and Places to discourage and suppress the Corruptions of the Age we live in; I do take it to be a special and signal Call from Heaven to you all to join unanimously in this great work of endeavouring to amend a corrupt World. And if any Magistrates or inferior Officers shall neglect to prosecute his Majesty's pious Intentions, they will have a great deal to answer for, not only to the King, but to the Great God the King of Kings; and they will bring the Guilt of others Sins upon themselves and the whole Nation: For the Connivance of Governours makes the Sins of private Persons the Sins of the Community; and altho the Punishment of private persons
or

or particular men may be deferred to a future State, yet Communities as such (as one well expresseth it) having no Resurrection in the World to come, they may justly expect the fruits of their Delinquencies in this present Life.

But because it cannot be hoped or expected that so great a work as the Reforming a polluted Age can be brought to any great effect, unless all that have the least stamp of Authority upon them, shall put their helping hand to this great Work; unless Parents and Masters of Families shall begin at home; unless Ministers and Magistrates, and all inferior Parish-Officers shall conspire and conjoin in this glorious Work: Let us therefore pray to Almighty God that he would inspire the Hearts of all Orders and Estates of Men in this our holy Church, that every Member of the same, in his Place and Office, Spiritual or Civil, may gird themselves with a true Christian Zeal and Courage to countenance Goodness, and to bring all Wickedness into a just shame and contempt; that so God may be glorified, and many Souls saved, and that God may delight to dwell amongst us, and that we may all rejoice and be glad in the Peace and Prosperity of our Church and State.

DEO GLORIA.

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working

ing in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the Words we have heard this day with our outward Ears, may through thy Grace be so grafted inwardly in our Hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of Good Living, to the Honour and Praise of thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, keep your Hearts and Minds in the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: And the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

F I N I S.



